

State Library of Massachusetts

Self-Guided Tour

Welcome to the State Library! Formally established in 1826, the library has resided in its present location in the “Brigham Addition” of the State House since 1895. As you explore our historic reading room and balcony on the mezzanine level above, be sure to check out the following interesting architectural details and unique items on display:



Stained Glass Windows

These intricate works of art were designed by architect Charles Brigham and crafted by the Lewis F. Perry painting & decorating firm. Look up to see the ceiling windows, which commemorate three historically significant dates, and be sure to get an up-close view of one of the fanlights when you visit the library's balcony level.

Theodore Roosevelt Bust

Located to the left of the reference desk, this bronze bust was sculpted in 1919 by John Gutzon Borglum, who also sculpted Mount Rushmore. This particular piece predates the start of the Mount Rushmore project by eight years.



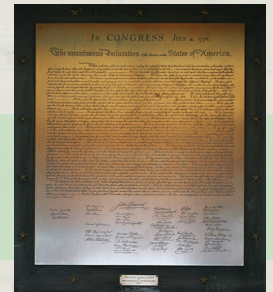
John James Audubon Prints

Decorating the walls of the reading room, these beautiful prints are reproductions from the library's complete original double elephant folio set of *The Birds of America*, printed between 1827 and 1838.



Declaration of Independence Plaque

To the right of the library's exit, you will find this engraved bronze plaque, designed and cast in 1928 in Providence, Rhode Island, and given to the library in 1929 by Governor Frank Allen.



Marble and Plaster Busts

Located throughout the library's reading room are busts of notable historical figures, including U.S. Senator George Frisbie Hoar, Massachusetts State Librarian Caleb Tillinghast, Chaplain Arthur Buckminster Fuller, Massachusetts Governor and U.S. Representative John Davis Long, and Roman statesman and orator Marcus Tullius Cicero.



Decorative Columns

As part of the library's 2014/15 renovation, the many beautifully decorated columns in the reading room were painstakingly restored to their original 1895 color scheme using a hand-painted stippling technique.



Continued on reverse



Portraits

Hanging in the reading room are two oil-on-canvas paintings, one of which depicts Charles Carleton Coffin, a Civil War newspaper correspondent. To the right of this portrait is the more recent painting of former Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Roderick Ireland, former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, and former U.S. Senator William "Mo" Cowan.

Official Massachusetts Legal and Legislative Volumes

As you look around the library's reading room, you will find hundreds of volumes of Massachusetts legislative resources lining the walls. As the official depository library of Massachusetts state publications, we hold such resources as the House and Senate Journals, Acts and Resolves, Legislative Documents, and the Massachusetts General Laws.



Civil War Soldier Photographs

To continue your tour upstairs, exit the reading room through the double doors and ascend the stairs, branching to the right, and enter Room 442. As you step onto the library's mezzanine balcony, notice the three portraits to your immediate left and right. These portraits of Sergeant Andrew Jackson Smith and two other unknown Civil War soldiers are from the library's collection of photographs and handwritten documents from the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiments.

Bird's-Eye View Maps

Located above the computers on the balcony level are several reproductions of historic bird's-eye view maps from the library's extensive holdings. Dating from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, these maps provide a fascinating view into a town's past.

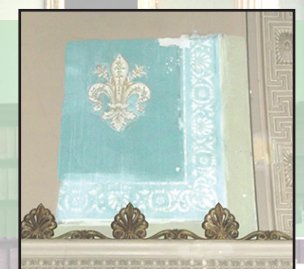


Decorative Rosettes

Notice the gold-toned rosettes lining the interiors of the archways that frame the view to the reading room below. These rosettes were restored to their original beauty as part of the library's 2014/15 renovation, during which time conservators drilled cross-sections from the library's walls to reveal the fifteen different colors of the library's original paint scheme.

Decorative Ceiling

The same painting and decorating firm that created the library's stained glass windows also painted the original decorative ceiling in the library with a raised fleur-de-lis design. Although the ceiling was painted over in 1964, the original paint colors are still visible in one small section located above the library's mezzanine.



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www.mass.gov/lib



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Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00am to 5:00pm

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